IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-31 (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) In an information distribution system comprising server equipment for providing both content and non-content data to subscriber equipment, said server equipment comprising:

a multiplex switch for multiplexing a plurality of formatted content data from server modules to produce an output stream ~~that is adapted~~ for transport to the subscriber equipment via a communication channel, wherein said multiplexing of said formatted content data is statistically performed; said multiplex switch comprises a converter module for formatting non-content data and a switching module for selectively multiplexing formatted non-content data into said output stream, wherein said multiplexing of formatted non-content data is on a future bandwidth availability basis that is predicted based on said multiplexing of said formatted content streams; and

a transport processor coupled to the multiplex switch for receiving the output stream from the multiplex switch and for transmitting to the multiplex switch reverse data channel information received via a reverse data channel.

33. (Previously Presented) The server equipment of claim 32, wherein said multiplex switch includes a buffer for storing non-content data and a switch controller for determining a bandwidth utilization level of said multiplex switch, said switch controller further for causing at least a portion of said non-content data in said buffer to be multiplexed into said output stream when said bandwidth utilization level falls below a threshold utilization bandwidth level.

34. (Previously Presented) The server equipment of claim 33, wherein said threshold bandwidth utilization level comprises a utilization level sufficient to process a single time

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extent, wherein said content streams are divided into a plurality of respective time extents.

35.   (Previously Presented) The server equipment of claim 33, wherein each of said content streams is divided into a plurality of respective time extents, and wherein said multiplex switch can multiplex a predefined number of time extents into said output stream.

36.   (Previously Presented) The server equipment of claim 32, wherein said non-content data comprises control data and non-control data, and wherein said multiplex switch preferentially multiplexes said non-control data.

37.   (Previously Presented) The server equipment of claim 32, wherein said non-content data comprises control data and non-control data, and wherein said multiplex switch preferentially multiplexes control data.

38.   (Previously Presented) The server equipment of claim 32, wherein said content data includes MPEG data.

39.   (Previously Presented) The server equipment of claim 32, wherein said non-content data includes internet protocol data.

40.   (Currently Amended) A method of providing content and non-content data to subscriber comprising the steps of:

statistically multiplexing a plurality of formatted content streams to produce an output stream that is adapted for transport to the subscriber via a communication channel;

formatting non-content data to fit the output stream;

predicting future bandwidth availability based on the statistical multiplexing of the formatted content streams;

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selectively multiplexing formatted non-content data into said output stream on a future bandwidth availability basis; and

receiving reverse data channel information.

41.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40 further including storing non-content data until bandwidth availability enables multiplexing of the stored non-content data.

42.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, furthering including dividing content streams into a plurality of respective time extents that are multiplexed a predefined number at a time into the output stream.

43.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40 wherein the output stream is an MPEG data stream.

44.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40 further including receiving the non-content data in an internet protocol format.

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